

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 04740 221219Z

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4174

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4740

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVIS FROM AMBASSADOR HUMMEL

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: EPAP, TSPA

SUBJ: CROP ESTIMATES AFTER LAND REFORM

1. THE IMPACT OF LAND REFORM AND OTHER CHANGES ON FOOD PRODUCTION IS A VERY HIGH PRIORITY TARGET FOR EMBASSY REPORTING IN COMING MONTHS, AND WE ARE ORGANIZING EMBASSY ASSETS FOR THAT TASK. BECAUSE OF INACCESSIBILITY OF MANY AREAS, AND GREAT DIVERSITY WITHIN THE COUNTRY, EMBASSY PROJECTIONS WILL HAVE LARGE GUESSTIMATE FACTOR. ONE PRELIMINARY AND HIGHLY TENTATIVE ESTIMATE BY A QUALIFIED US EXPERT IS THAT WITHIN A YEAR ETHIOPIA WILL HAVE TO IMPORT AS MUCH AS 200,000 TONS OF FOOD GRAINS BECAUSE OF CHANGED PATTERNS OF INCENTIVES, CREDIT, AND PRODUCTION AS RESULT OF LAND REFORM. PRINCIPAL IMPACT OF SHORTFALL OF WHATEVER SIZE IS LIKELY TO BE FELT IN CITIES. THERE WOULD BE GREAT POLITICAL FALLOUT FROM THIS ECONOMIC PROBLEM, POSSIBLY AFFECTING THE STABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT. HENCE OUR STRONG INTEREST IN GETTING EARLY WARNING OF ANY SUBSTANTIAL SHORTFALL.

2. ONE POTENTIALLY USEFUL TOOL IS THE ERTS (LANDSAT) SYSTEM. AID HAS ALREADY HAD CORRESPONDENCE WITH WASHINGTON ABOUT UTILIZING THIS SYSTEM. HAVING BEEN INVOLVED SOME TIME AGO IN ANOTHER ERTS PROJECT, I KNOW SOME OF THE COMPLEXITIES: OF ESTABLISHING PRIOR-YEAR
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PAGE 02 ADDIS 04740 221219Z

PARAMETERS FOR MEANINGFUL COMPARISON WITH NEW DATA;

OF FEEDING INTO THIS PROCESS ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE
VARIGATED AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES AND SEASONS IN ETHIOPIA;
AND OF ORGANIZING A COORDINATED WASHINGTON EFFORT.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT THE AF BUREAU TAKE AN ACTIVE
ROLE IN ESTABLISHING A HIGH PRIORITY FOR ERTS EFFORT; AND
IN ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTION AND COORDINATION.
HUMMEL

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